

**Fidget Sleeves Reduce Stress for Dementia Patients** (Decorated with beads, buttons, and bobs, the knitted or crocheted cuffs provide a stimulation activity for restless hands).

By **Jessica Bennett**, February 24, 2021



*Courtesy of Dchstrust Walton Hospital*

Although stitching together something cozy for yourself is certainly a lovely way to pass the time, a crochet project that helps others is even more gratifying. And these soothing sleeves may be our new favorite way to use handicraft skills to lend a hand. Fidget sleeves, also called twiddle muffs or cannula sleeves, are crocheted arm cuffs that can help reduce stress for people prone to anxiety and fidgeting, like those living with dementia. Knitters and crocheters are stitching them up to donate to local hospitals, hospices, and other care facilities.

Restlessness and agitation are common behaviors for those with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, and having something to occupy their hands can help soothe their distress. That's where fidget sleeves come in. Decorated with beads, buttons, or crocheted decorations, the cuffs provide a stimulation activity for restless hands while protecting patients' arms from picking or scratching. The sleeves can also be made to reach farther up the arm in order to cover and protect the entry point of an IV tube or cannula. These sensory sleeves may also be helpful for individuals with autism or kids who struggle to sit still. Completely customizable, the muffs can be crocheted to any size and with any decorations desired.

One UK woman started a Facebook group called Handmade for Dementia that gathers knitters together to make fidget sleeves and other comfort items for local hospitals. The items are risk-assessed for choking hazards and other concerns before being donated. If you know someone who could benefit from one of these sleeves, there are several Etsy sellers who offer custom cuffs with a variety of yarn colors and embellishments. If you're a knitter or crocheter yourself, you can DIY a fidget sleeve using this pattern from the Alzheimer Society of Canada. (Bonus: The project is perfect for using up scrap yarn and extra baubles!)

To find out where to donate your crocheted fidget sleeve, start by contacting local senior living facilities and hospitals to see if they'll accept fidget sleeves for dementia patients. Your needle skills could make someone's life much more comfortable.

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